

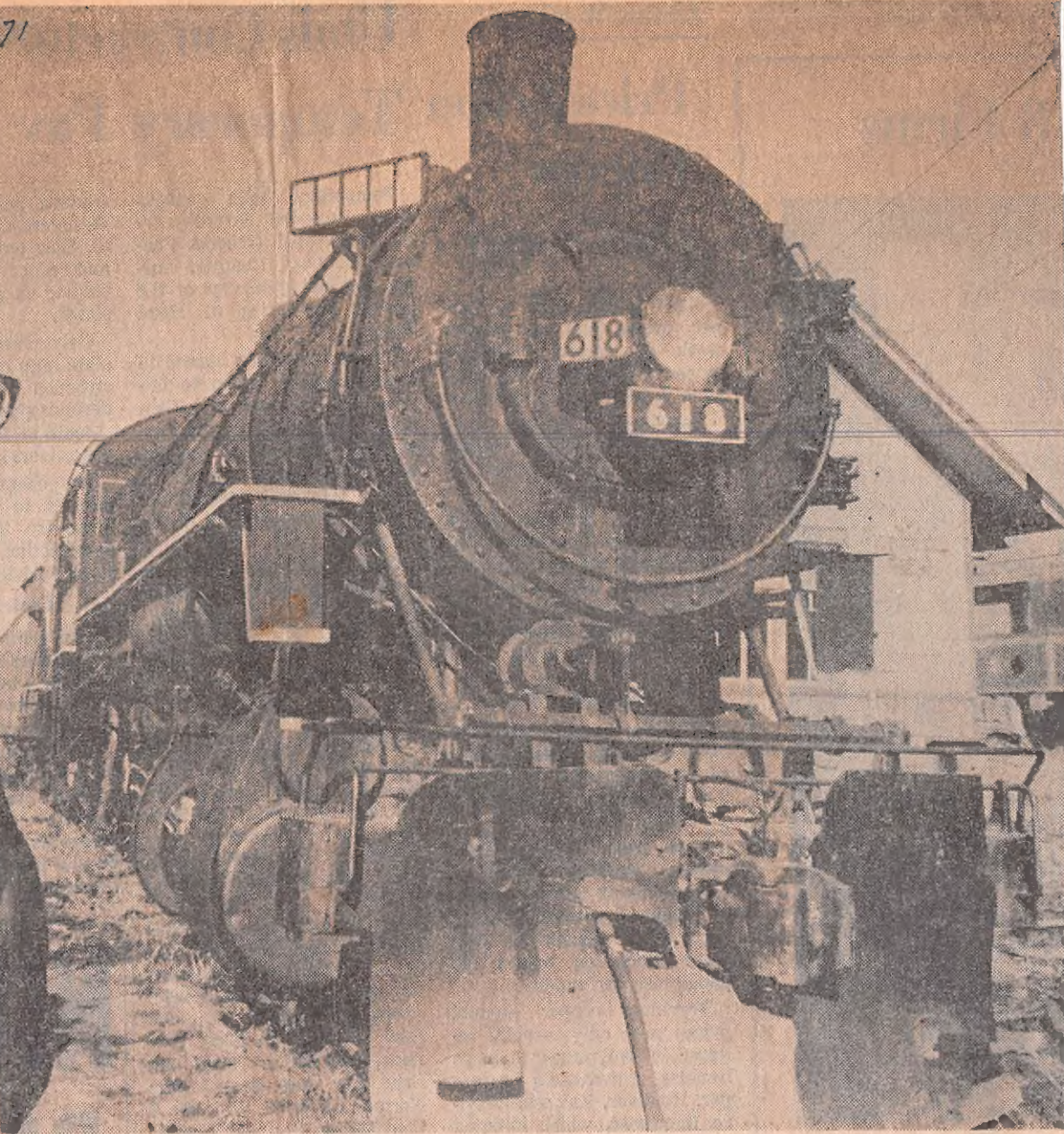
SL Tribune 1-31-71



Lowe Ashton is the prime mover behind effort to keep the Heber Creeper rolling. Or-

ganization has pooled resources, hired a full-time employee to press its goals. Road build-

ers project high costs for separations for highway and railroad in canyon sections.



Up and Down the Street

'Heber Creeper' Panel Must Pour on Steam Before Project Derails

By Robert H. Woody
Tribune Business Editor

HEBER — A couple of years ago the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Co. finally got out of business on its 28-mile branch between Provo and Heber.

Back at the turn of the Century the "Heber Creeper" had been the way to get between Provo and Heber.

Lumber, wool, livestock, commodities, furniture, people — were hauled over a route that wound through a spectacular breach in the Wasatch Mountains and rolled through the pastoral beauty of the Heber Valley.



Mr. Woody

Sold Out to State

Two years ago — with the trains running only on an "as necessary" basis (about once a week) — the D&RGW bailed out and sold the road and right-of-way to the State Road Commission.

For the commission it was a logical route for improved highway linkage between Provo and Heber. Tentatively that linkage would follow the railroad bed in the lower part of the canyon, and the current highway alignment higher up, then switch back to the old railroad bed as it wends around the north arm of Deer Creek Reservoir.

But wait a minute! Hold everything!

Why Let It Die?

the Heber Creeper die? The in place and in pretty good canyon is beautiful. The Deer Creek abounds with beauty. Why not keep the a recreation attraction package. The highway through the canyon highway can live to. But as far as why can't the long or near its of the reservoir erates to the

n Lives

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Heber Creeper Committee Has to Pour on Steam

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which are operating in other states as growing tourist attractions.

Persuaded by Operation

Mr. Ashton and nine other associates have been sufficiently persuaded by the operation that between them they have pledged \$60,000 to form a nucleus operating corporation, Wasatch Mountain Railway & Development Co. They also have hired a full-time director, Edward M. McLaughlin, a railroad buff and former member of the Weber County Planning Department.

Assuming some kind of go-ahead on the right-of-way declaration, they intend to form a public corporation through a public offering of up to \$500,000 in stock shares.

So far they've spent about \$9,500 to promote their project and assemble some rolling stock that includes a locomotive, five husky Army hospital cars and a caboose.

Sweat, Blood, Tears

In no small part the gathering of the rolling stock was the product of the sweat, blood and tears of railroad fans and buffs; who served as unpaid crewmen in getting the engine and cars to Heber.

Mr. Ashton is owner of the old Heber depot and seven acres of land. The 1907-vintage steam engine, a 170-ton "Consolidation 2-8-0" is owned by the state and for many years was at the State Fairgrounds.

The "Golden Spike Empire"

— Davis, Morgan, Weber and Box Elder counties — donated the five hospital cars. (Mr. Lowe would have these refurbished into plush traveling coaches.) Brigham Young University loaned the red caboose.

In addition, Mr. Ashton says the company has four other steam engines, four passenger cars and one combination baggage and passenger car lined up at other points to move onto the Heber Creeper branch.

The hard realities?

State Readies Construction

The State Highway Commission is ready to move ahead with construction in the lower part of the canyon. The commission has given the "Save the Heber Creeper Committee" to April 1 to come up with a feasibility report for operation. Then it will start removing tracks between the Olmstead power station at the bottom of the canyon and Wildwood, about two thirds of the way up the canyon.

That means the Creeper group will have to move its rolling stock onto the remaining branch by that date.

Now, assuming the Creeper group does get the state to authorize sale of the right-of-way to the State Division of Parks and Recreation, who pays for the costs of separations between track and highway?

Several Separations?

Henry C. Helland, director of the highway commission, says several separations may be needed. Because of the heavy flow of traffic, grade crossings are impractical. Either the rail line has to go over the road or the road has to go over the rail line! And that costs money. The highway commission would want the park and recreation division to pay for those separations. For the highway department to pay for the separations would be improper use of the highway users' tax, Mr. Helland said.

Mr. Ashton says his group wants the sale made without the incumbency of the costs of the separations.

What if the enterprise fails?

The prorated cost to the state for purchase of the 19½ miles of roadbed between Bridal Veil and Heber was \$232,750, says Mr. Ashton.

State Won't Lose

If the Heber Creeper goes, the state can expect to get about half that cost, or \$116,000, as a recreation demonstration grant from the federal government.

Assuming the enterprise is failure, then the state could sell those ties and iron rails for about \$160,000 in salvage.

It will not have lost anything for its risk.

The state intends to build a wide, two-lane highway through Provo Canyon with room for two more lanes later on. It is a federal highway, No. 189, and will have about 75 percent federal backing.

Why not, asks Mr. Ashton, construct a wide, two-lane

highway with spaced passing lanes as was done in lower Logan Canyon and thus preserve as much of the canyon as possible?

But what worked for lower Logan Canyon will not work for Provo Canyon, says Mr. Helland. "We'd find ourselves bottled up."

Why can't the highway fol-

low current alignment around the south side of Deer Creek Reservoir, thus preserving the pure recreation aspects of the virtually untrammelled north side?

The south side would be a much tougher route for road builders, says Mr. Helland. The slopes are unstable. The north side is fairly gentle and

structurally much more suitable for road building.

Whatever, this is not a problem that has to be resolved immediately. The state doesn't expect to "get out of the canyon" for six to eight years, Mr. Helland says.

The Parks and Recreation Division's point of view?

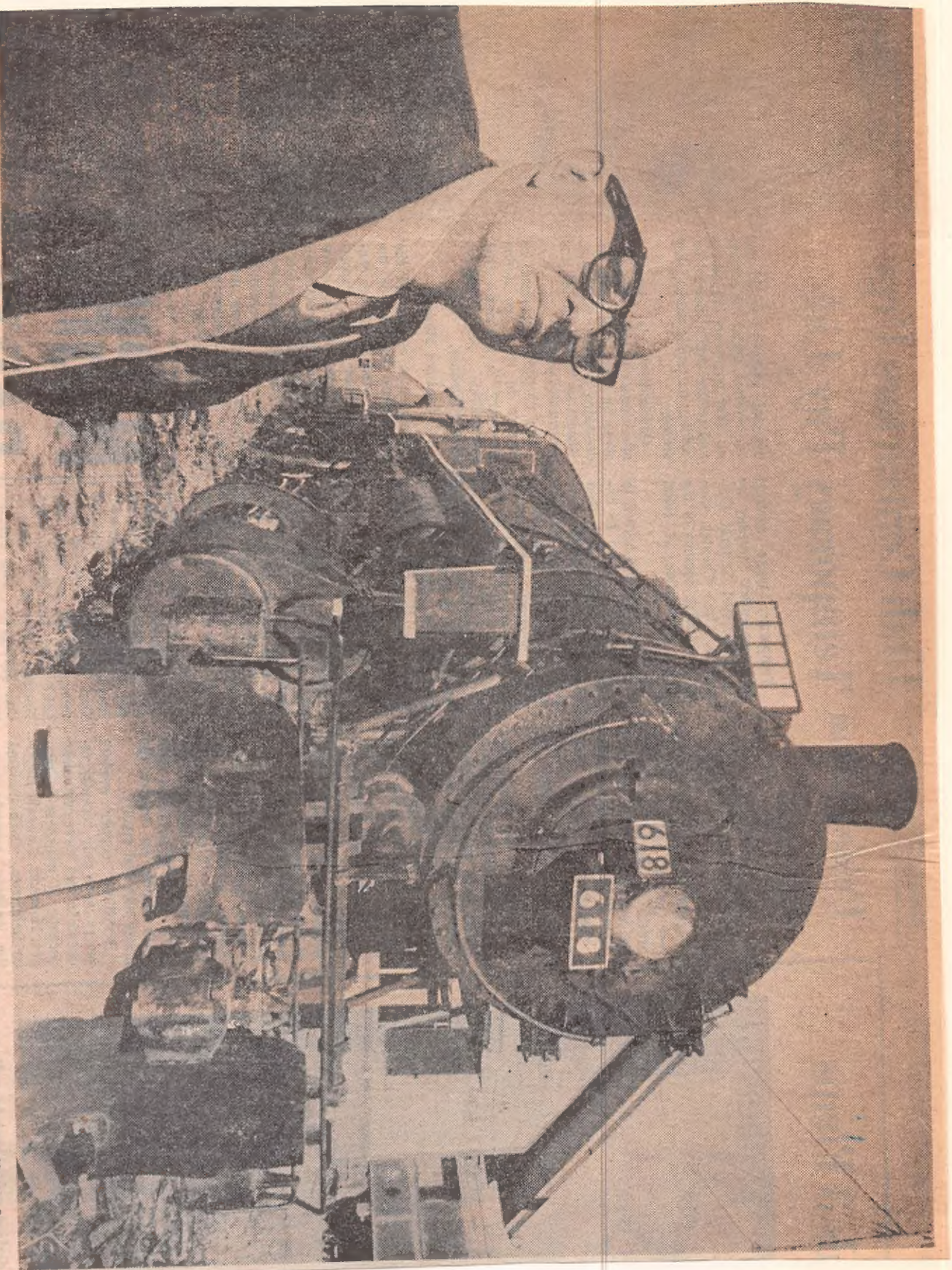
Whatever, the right-of-way should remain in state ownership says Harold P. Tippetts, division director. It probably would require a commitment from the Legislature for the Parks and Recreation Division to buy the right-of-way

from the State Highway Commission.

The first need is for the highway commission to refine its design. Then the division would take a hard look at the economics and feasibility of the railroad, he said.

Aesthetics?

The Heber Creeper would occupy its 6½-foot wide traveling corridor only during the four round-trip daily runs, says Mr. Ashton. Oil instead of coal would be used to fire the boilers. Carefully controlled, this would eliminate any smoke.



Lowe Ashton is the prime mover behind effort to keep the Heber Creeper rolling. Or-

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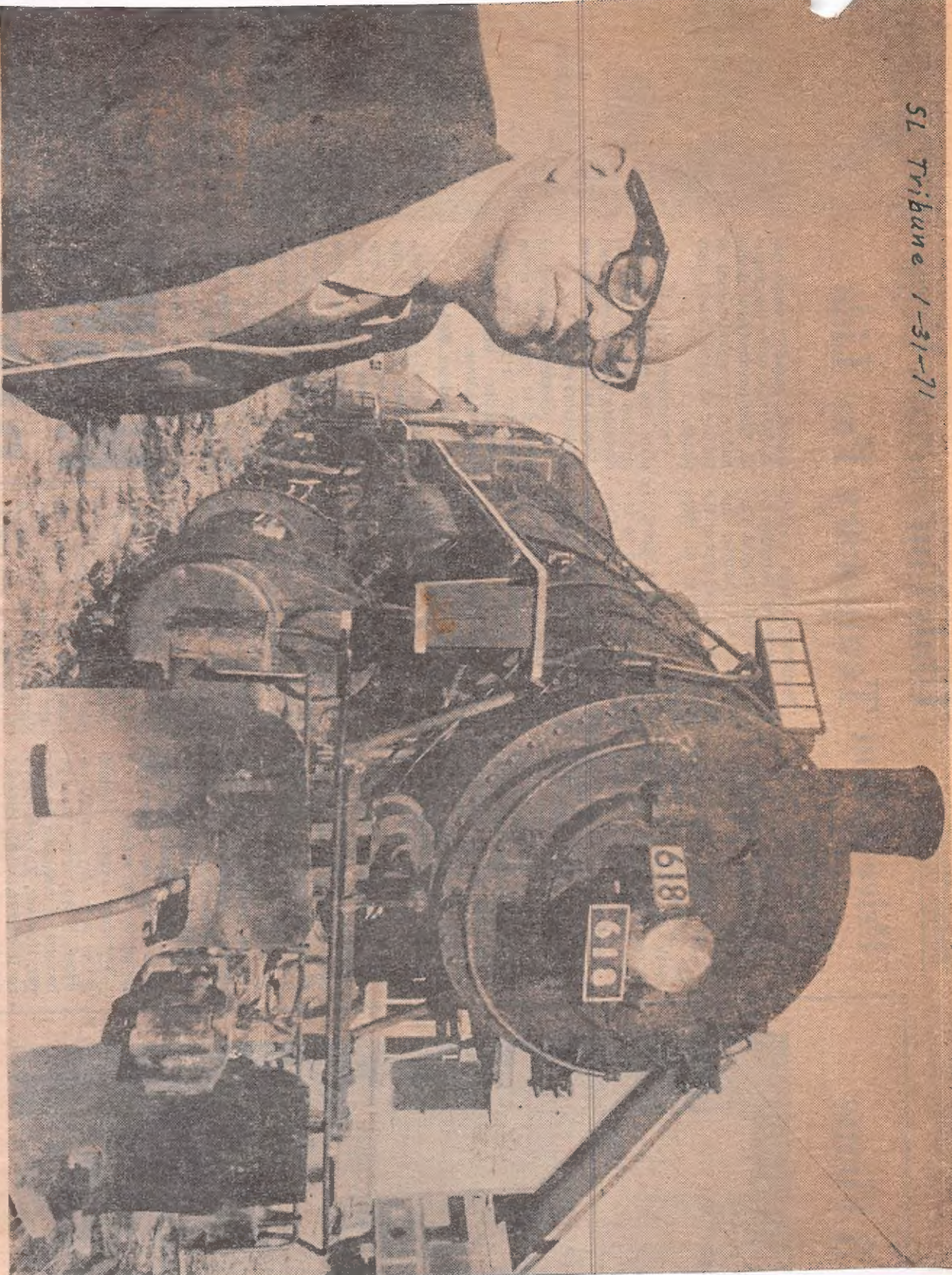
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Salt Lake Tribune Business

Mines-Marknance

Sunday

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Section F

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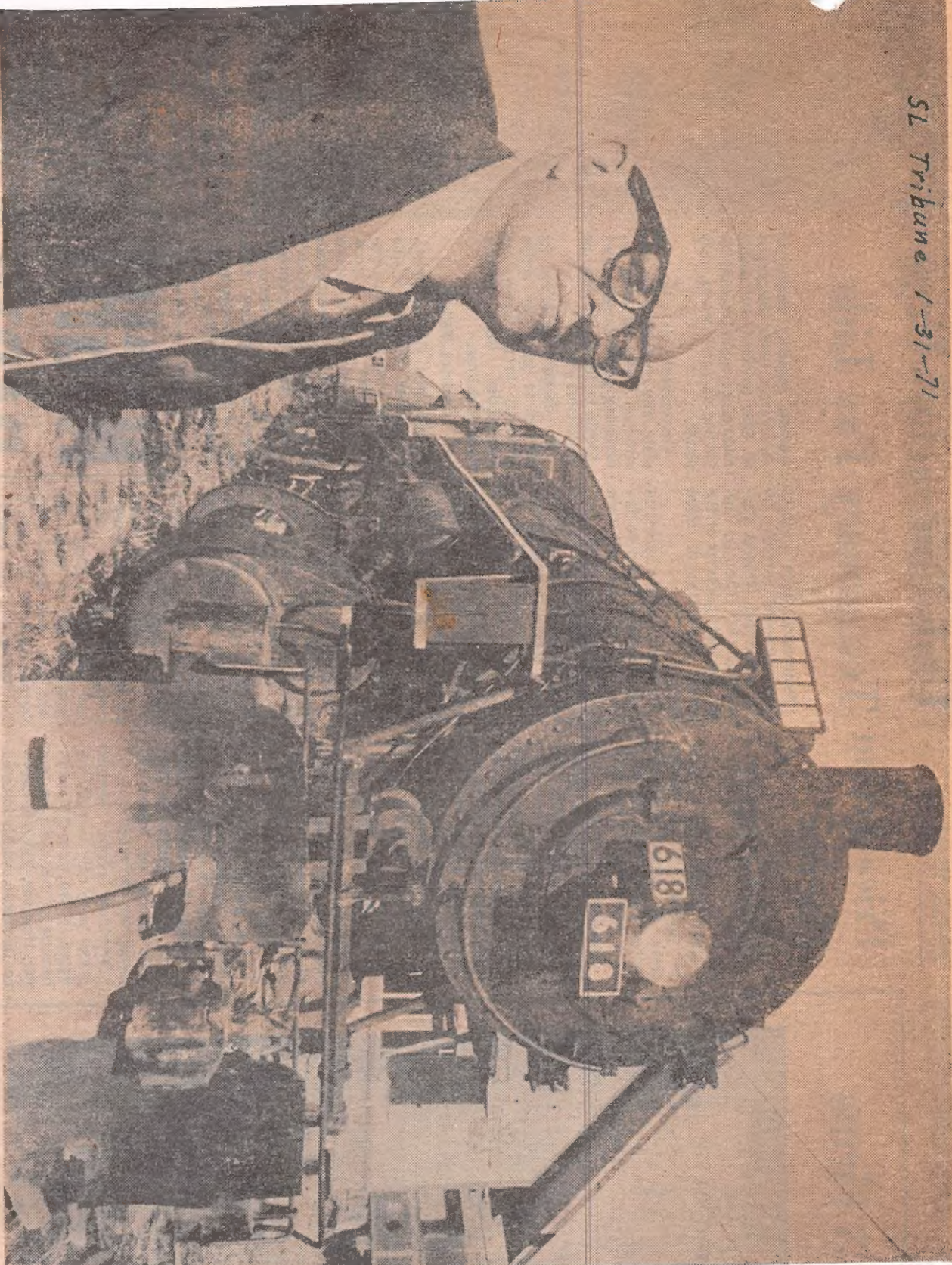
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Section F Page One

Inventor Designs Swift, Short Takeoff Aircraft

LONDON (AP) — Veteran inventor Sir Barnes Wallis has designed a vertical and short takeoff and landing supersonic transport (V-STOL SST) plane which he said is capable of flying at five times the speed of sound.

Sir Barnes told newsmen the plane could land on runways 300 yards long and carry 120 passengers at cruise speeds of 3,000 miles an hour. After a quick change of the plane's floor, it also could carry freight, he said.

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Continued From Page F-1

which are operating in other states as growing tourist attractions.

Persuaded by Operation

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